



# MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

### 280 – ALARMS

**GENERAL ORDER:** 2014–85  
**ISSUED:** July 30, 2014

**EFFECTIVE:** July 30, 2014

**REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:**  
Captain Regina Howard  
**DATE:** July 14, 2014

**ACTION:** Amends General Order 2012-22 (August 28, 2012)

**WILEAG STANDARD(S):** 9.1.12

#### **280.00 PURPOSE / POLICY**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide members with instructions related to alarms. The Milwaukee Police Department's policy is to respond to alarms that have been verified or in circumstances in which other validating information has been received.

#### **280.05 DEFINITIONS**

##### **A. ALARM USER**

The person in control of any building, structure or facility or portion thereof in, which an alarm system is in operation [Milwaukee City Ordinance (MCO) 105-75-2 (f)].

##### **B. FALSE ALARM**

An alarm notification summoning the fire or police department to the location of the alarm activation, when the responding member finds no evidence of the crimes of burglary, robbery, attempted robbery or fire. False alarm does not include an alarm activation signal caused by extraordinary extremes of weather such as high winds, thunder and lightning storms or other systematic electric disturbances (MCO 105-75-2 (h)).

##### **C. PERSON**

An individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation or any other business entity with the exception of any government agency, government employees or individuals acting in the course of government business (MCO 105-75-2 (L)).

##### **D. PRIVATE FIRST RESPONDER SERVICE**

A service provided by an alarm business, either through an alarm representative or through a private security company that holds a private first responder service license and is under contract with the business, that determines, by means of on-site inspection, whether an attempted or actual crime has occurred at the site of an activated burglar alarm.

Excluded from the definition of private first responder service are those services or personnel directly employed or contracted by businesses to respond to their own

alarm systems (MCO 105-75-2 (m)).

#### E. TWO-WAY VOICE INTERCOM

An alarm feature that allows an alarm company to determine what is happening at the alarm location by verbally communicating with occupants using a speaker and microphone in the alarm panel or from other locations at the premise.

#### F. VERIFIED ALARM

An alarm that a person or private first responder has determined is not a false alarm prior to contacting the police department (MCO 105-75-2 (o)).

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### **280.10 GENERAL PROCEDURES**

A. The Milwaukee Police Department responds to verified burglar alarms. An alarm is considered “verified” when a person or private first responder has determined it is not a false alarm prior to contacting the police department.

1. A key holder / verifying person is required to respond to the scene of the alarm.
2. The person calling in the alarm to the Milwaukee Police Department shall be instructed that the verifying person(s) must remain in a safe location at or near the scene until police have responded in order to aid in the investigation of the alarm.

B. The Milwaukee Police Department does respond to the following non-verified alarms:

1. Alarms received through the Toepfer Alarm System located in the Technical Communications Division.
2. Alarms received on government buildings/installations.
3. Scout Alarms.
4. Any alarms associated with a specific problem or trend of criminal activity that the department is cognizant of and an immediate police response to the alarm could lead to the identification and arrest of suspects.

- C. When a Scout Alarm sensor is triggered at an alarmed location, the alarm notification is received at the Technical Communications Division (TCD) on the designated Milwaukee Police Department alarm-monitoring phone. The alarm is received as a recorded voice message, via a Bluetooth paired cell phone contained within the unit. Upon receiving notice of alarm activation at TCD, a TCD supervisor will determine if a response is necessary and if so, promptly enter the alarm into CADS for immediate police response.

### **280.15 UNLICENSED ALARM COMPANIES**

The department shall not respond to burglar alarms from unlicensed alarm companies.

### **280.20 UNLAWFUL ALARMS**

The department shall not respond to unlawful private alarms as specified in MCO 105-75-11:

Sub (a) - Automated Alarm Notification Prohibited. No person may use or operate, attempt to use or operate, or cause to be used or operated, or arrange, adjust, program or otherwise provide or install any alarm system that upon activation will initiate, transmit, or deliver an alarm notification to any city agency by automated means.

Sub (b) - Panic Alarm Notification Prohibited. No person may initiate, transmit, or deliver an alarm notification in the nature of a panic alert, police alert, medical alert or disturbance alert to any city agency by automated means, electronic or telephonic means, or other miscellaneous signal or message as distinguished from burglary, robbery (hold-up) or fire alarms.

Sub (c) - Multiple Trip Sensor and Audio Sensor Notification Prohibited. No person may initiate, transmit, or deliver by automatic means, electronic or telephonic means, any request for service to any city agency based upon multiple trip sensors or audio sensors.

Sub (d) - Exception. d-1.

Reproducible video or two-way voice intercom type of alarm systems are not considered the reporting of a verified burglar alarm, but the reporting of a particular "incident" that is verbally reported to the telecommunicator by the alarm company operator. The incident will be prioritized accordingly for police response or referred to DPR.

- a. Alarm service providers must describe to the police telecommunicator what they observed on reproducible video or be capable of verbally communicating specific information obtained via a two-way voice intercom that verifies the validity of the incident. Additionally, the verifying video and/or two-way voice intercom recording(s) must be turned over to the Milwaukee Police Department within 24 hours.

- b. The alarm verifying video and/or two-way voice intercom recording(s) shall be submitted as an e-mail attachment to **REDACTED**. Video and two-way voice intercom files must be in a standard format that can be viewed and/or listened to using "Windows Media Player" version 9 or greater. Proprietary file formats and/or CODEC (derived from the two words compressor and de-compressor and used to encode or decode a file) will not be acceptable.
- c. Documentation provided to the department in support of video or two-way voice intercom recordings shall remain confidential. The Milwaukee Police Department will not release any such documentation except as required for lawful prosecution.

### **280.25 ALARM RESPONSE**

Department members responding to alarms shall ensure points of entry are checked and that there is no evidence of burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, attempted robbery or fire.

### **280.30 C-CODE DISPOSITIONS**

Members investigating alarms shall be responsible for the transmission of the appropriate "C-Code" disposition to the dispatcher upon completion.

### **280.35 FALSE ALARM SIGNALS**

#### **A. INTENTIONAL FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS**

Disposition code "C-19" is also to be used if the responding member(s) determine that the alarm was intentionally signaled by a person at the premises in order to summon police and/or fire response for matters other than burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, attempted robbery or fire. Such intentional but inappropriate alarm activities include, but are not limited to, fights, disorderly patrons, shoplifters, thefts, unanticipated tests of equipment, etc. In these cases, the reason for the activation is to be provided to the dispatcher at the time the C -19 disposition code is given.

1. When a member has determined an alarm signal to be a "false alarm", he or she shall complete the necessary information on the *False Alarm Notification* (form PF-14) and give it to the owner or occupant of the alarmed premises if at the scene of a false alarm. If the owner or occupant is not at the scene, the PF-14 shall be placed in any receptacle that is located near the main entrance of the residence or business. This form shall not be placed in a location that leaves it exposed to public view.

#### **B. C-19 FALSE ALARM DISPOSITIONS**

1. No Burglary, Robbery or Fire

Disposition code C-19 shall be used in cases in which no evidence of burglary,

attempted burglary, robbery, attempted robbery, or fire is discovered after the involved premises have been checked.

## 2. Weather Extremes or Electric Disturbance

Disposition code C-19W shall be used for "false alarms" that have been caused by extremes of weather conditions or systemic electrical disturbances. These dispositions shall include the nature of the suspected problem at the time the C-19W code is given to the dispatcher (these will not be tallied against the premise's "excessive alarm" limit, and it is therefore essential that this mitigating information be provided).

## C. CITATION ISSUANCE

### 1. Recording False Alarms

- a. The Technical Communications Division shall be responsible for records relating to the enforcement of the false alarm ordinance. C-19 false alarm disposition codes shall be tallied by the Technical Communications Division for all locations that notify the department of alarm signals.
- b. The Technical Communications Division shall be responsible for the issuance of municipal citations to alarm users after the second false alarm that occurs within a calendar year.
- c. The Technical Communications Division shall be responsible for the issuance of municipal citations to unlicensed alarm companies and companies that transmit prohibited alarms.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward A. Flynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EDWARD A. FLYNN  
CHIEF OF POLICE